The Register

Boston Latin School

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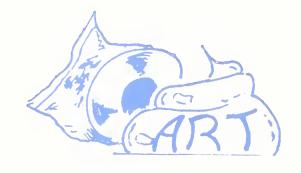
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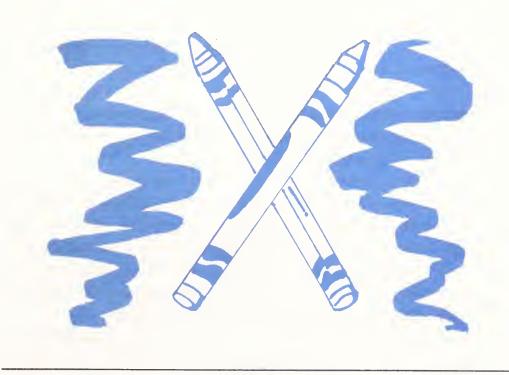
GAMES

I juggle crayons like stained glass swords Streaking the dark night with Rose, periwinkle, jungle green. I always catch the wrong end Until my hands are caked with color.

I toss postage stamps into the humid air, Hold them there with the whale spout of my breath Until I inhale and they fly down my throat Wallpapering my lungs with tiny Lincolns, and biplanes, and African violets.

I spin all my rings at once Creating confused constellations Of tiny wavering globes Silver, tin, and plastic On the smooth hardwood floor.

-Malka Older, Class I



THE ATTIC

I remember his face, the inflated cheeks and the pouting lip. The floppy hair attacking his forehead whenever he would reposition his head. He always had trouble with that head of his. Oh, how he would try to turn to see me, not ever realizing he could turn his head no further. "Peter," I would say, grabbing his nearest shoulder, "move your feet, for godsakes." I said this and he would laugh. Not a giggle, but a laugh, perhaps he even guffawed once and a while. Then he would look down at his feet and move them.

Peter lived two blocks over, past Jimmie's house and right in front of Billy's. He didn't play baseball, so he wasn't good friends with Billy. Jimmie would always say he was stoopid.

"That Peter sho is stoopid," Jimmie would say, his native Louisiana drawl folding and unfolding words into different shapes; an origami of words, often making a duck instead of a swan.

"He is not stupid, he is just slow." I thought not using conjunctions made me sound better, more deliberate. Jimmie would just shake his head and tell me he was stoopid and his father didn't want no stoopid kid rubbin' off on him. Jimmie's father didn't seem to like anyone, especially me and my, what did he call us? Oh yeah, "me and mah Yankee, liberal, commies." He was convinced we were all on the black list and my dad was an outright pinko.

Peter and I sure got along. He couldn't play any sports, unless you count the number

of times I'd have to tackle him (visions of Dick Butkus dancing through my head) before he ran onto a busy street, sometimes knocking the wind out of him. He wouldn't cry. He would get up and wheeze for a few minutes, and then stand there, his face wrinkled as if he were deep in thought; but his eyes told me he was confused as ever.

He wasn't good at flipping cards either. Jimmie would always insist on about twelve cards he wouldn't give up, and Billy would only bring the cards that were cluttering his already messy room. Peter would just sit there and give whatever card he flipped, and I would insist that he should keep Willie Mays, and I would keep my less-than-godly card. He would look at my third string shortstop and say that it was more prettee than Willee Maeez. If I objected more, his face would sink about two inches, his already sulking lip slumping below his chin. I would give him his Butch Harrison, but would slip the Willie Mays back into his pile while he gushed over the pretty colors. He never appeared more lucid or alive than when he had a bright colored card. Except for our trips to the town square.

Peter loved the town square, and it was rare that we would make the trip, instead preferring to stay inside. When we would make the mile walk down old Route 28, Peter would be so excited we would have to stop every ten minutes so Peter could relieve himself. He got very excited.

The ice cream shoppe (that's how

they spelled it), Daly's, was Peter's first stop, buying a banana split. Banana was the hardest word for him to say, usually escaping as some stuttering repetition of a syllable vaguely resembling 'nah.' When he was in good form, he would try and add a 'b' to the beginning. Richard and his twin brother Mel, otherwise known as Melon for his large head, were the shoppekeepers. They thought Peter a foundation for a building of humor, placing one floor of derogatory jokes over another. Sometimes Peter would laugh nervously, his eyes starting to water; other times he would concentrate on his nananah splih, the potassium rich hot fudge lava spurting from the

sides of his mouth as he inhaled the dense, oily mess.

The next stop was the hardware store, which changed hands often. Peter loved pipes. We would often fit a few pipes together and he would sit ten feet away, the cold steel pressed against his anxious ear as I would talk into the other end. He would laugh when I would blow air through the pipe, tickling his ear.

Peter left a few years later. My mother wouldn't tell me why, and my father simply avoided the question at dinner.

I found an old obituary today in my mother's scrapbook.

-Eben Burnham-Snyder, Class I



I.

Infrastructure

Enormous

Towering below me.

I do not know what the infrastructure is, yet I feel as if it is very very close...And it's coming closer and it won't go away. Why do I feel so threatened? When? Not morning because then I'd have all day. Not night because then it's worse. But afternoon. When I'm aware that it's too late for anything productive. Too late for mom to let me go anywhere. Dusk will be here in an hour or two. Dad's watching football. It's raining. But the forecast for tomorrow is sun. Sunshine and a little wind. That means we'll go outside for recess, and I don't have anyone to play with. And there's a grammar test right after lunch and I don't know the difference between active and passive. Nobody told me. I was absent that day because I had gym and it was jump rope day and I didn't have a partner. And I didn't care enough to ask anyone about the test. I always excelled at being apathetic in grade school.

II.

If I had an axe I would disassemble it quickly so that nobody would know that I had an axe. If they knew I had an axe, they would take it away from me. I don't want them to do that because I have *things* that I would like to do with my axe.

My axe would be steady and strong. It would never fail me. We would have a marriage in which I would wipe off all evidence of sin or meditation from my axe, and my axe would protect me from anybody who wanted to hurt me in any way.

My axe would certainly be red. Why red? Oh, I've always thought that certain colors were friends with certain colors and enemies with others. It was the same with numbers. I always felt as if 5 and 7 were always fighting over 6. 7 was always winning slightly because 6 appeared to face 7. In any case, red and green were always friends. I see myself as green. But none of this could ever happen. That's why I have an imaginary axe.

Ш.

Look at yourself! You have fallen on your face. You're satisfied in your comfortable clothing, your dirty underwear that isn't dirty at all—it's just because of your being tired, lazy, and relaxed. A sleepy melody covers me until I am driven to sway to and fro.

-Amy Lawless, Class I

TEnNis ShOES

A forsaken heart

left in the rain like an old pair of tennis shoes
the ones with the holes that are ugly and dirty
worn on the day when nothing else goes right

But this time they got too wet It rained for days and days

She was looking for them, really she was

But they were right before her

And she saw that it was too late

She then bought another pair and replaced them.

-Kelly Gushue, Class I



THE STORM

"Grandma" Thompson, as she was known by all throughout the sleepy little southern town, sat placidly upon her diminutive porch, the long, aged groans of her rocking chair a rhythmic, dying heartbeat punctuating the silence of her world. She was old perhaps eighty—and as many had sympathetically remarked, the years had taken their toll upon her. The extent of her former beauty was still evident in the shape of her face, the small mouth set so perfectly into her visage, and the deep brown eyes which so complemented her hair. But gone now was the angelic beauty of youth, the deep time-worn furrows adorning her countenance—almost desecration to her former being. The youthful dark curls of her hair had now given way to a thin, matted thatch, rightfully hidden behind the more preferable blue kerchief which now embellished her forehead. She was, as it was said, a being whose best years had long ago come and gone. A queen of the past.

And so the old queen sat upon her wooden throne and rocked.

Around her the sounds and sights of the dusk mingled in such a way as only can be seen in Atlanta. The tiny rustlings of crickets and birds, the dim golden hue of the sun on its ritual descent, the large dark clouds which swam about the sky, the slight crackling of the wind through the trees—she regarded them with much more than just a passing interest, often dwelling upon each for several

moments before relinquishing them to nature.

"So it will be a beautiful night, Lawd," she whispered, her hands momentarily rising from her lap, then indecisively returning, as if unsure of what their function was.

"A beautiful night," she reiterated, but this time with visibly less conviction. Disturbed, she once again fumbled nervously with her hands, returning them to their place slowly and deliberately. Something was amiss in nature tonight—she knew by the way her bones and muscles ached beneath her flesh, by the sharp sting of moisture in her nostrils and minute tension of static electricity in every moment. A storm was gathering, she knew, one that would rend this moment of beauty apart forever.

For an indescribable length of time she watched and waited for her prediction to be fulfilled. And she thought: the calm before the storm.

When the rain came, it arrived in a seemingly harmless pattern—she watched as the first few drops struck the parched land. Quenching its thirst, she thought with an inward chuckle. Like glittering diamonds the droplets of water fell to the earth, with more and more frequency, until the entire ground was awash with a torrent of activity. Down came the blinding sheets of water, their staccato drumbeats upon the earth and house merging in an incoherent clamor. She thought of the natural beauty of the sound, imagined

the entire house drifting through a world of rain. The pangs in her bones increased and drew her from this reverie. The storm was just beginning.

Out into the rain she stared but her thoughts were turned inward. "Lawd," she whispered, "It's all a bunch o' storms and lulls, ain'tit?" Mustering her thoughts through the strength in her words, she continued.

"Life, I mean," she spoke into the dazzling darkness, into the chaos that nature had become. "And in my time, I've seen my share!" Her gaze turned upward with these words, her eyes slowly lifting towards the sky. "Guess it's the way of things, you know, that there'll always be hard times."

And her thoughts turned to years past, from her childhood of poverty during the depression, to watching her children march off to Vietnam. Hard times.

"But I seen my share of lulls, too!" she added with a strained smile, her gaze still locked upon the sky. A powerful crack of thunder tore through the monotony of the rain, its resounding echo signaling a brilliant flash of light. And for a moment, "Grandma" Thompson saw the world in light, witnessed a mere taste of the power of creation. The

wind, once stirring a faint rustle within the branches of nearby trees, now sped over her, its invisible hands scouring her face and arms with the jolting coolness of water. It was almost painful, but she remained seated, her rocking motion unhurried.

"Life," she reiterated, "It's like a journey on a ship ever closer to that destination. And all the storms and lulls on de way, they just happen." Her words were drowned out by yet another sharp peal of thunder. Blazing white illumination fell upon her white features, over-emphasizing the contrast between light and shadow. Her voice now emerged weak and subdued, carrying an underlying sadness that startled her.

"I'm almost there, Lawd. I've almost finished my journey. Just dis one more storm. It's all I can take."

She rose slowly from the chair, walked to the door of her home. Her steps were slow and deliberate. She held the door ajar, looked hesitantly at the entrance, then turned once again to the blinding torrent of rain. At this chaotic landscape she took one final glance.

"Just dis one more storm, Lawd. Then I comin' home."

-David Enos, Class III

CREST

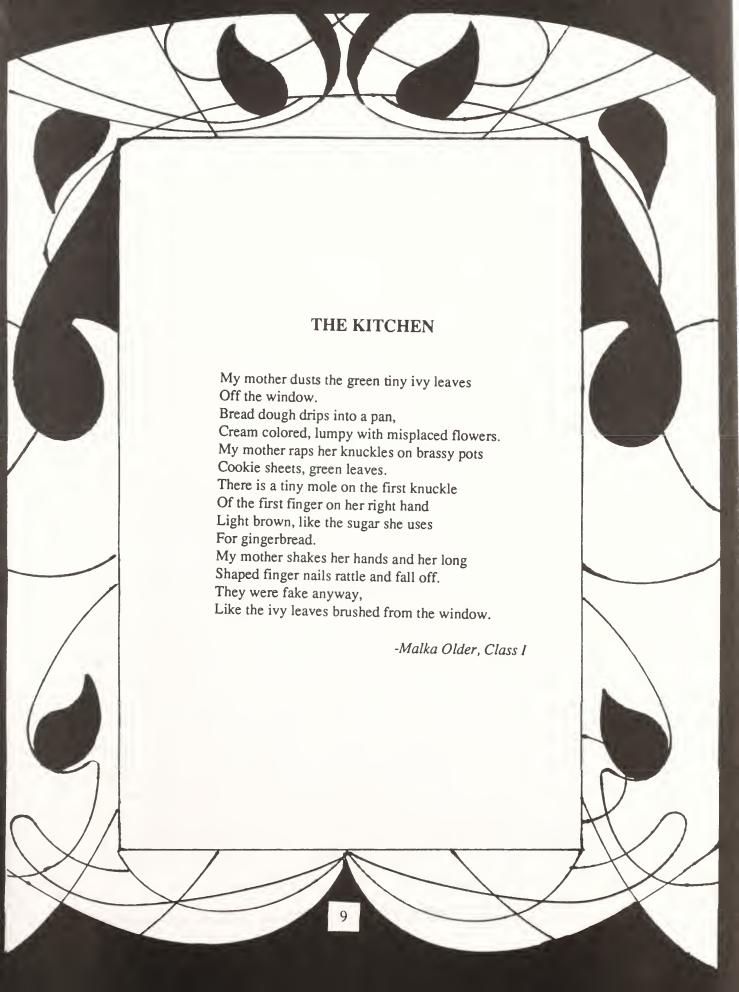
There are two kinds of people in this world. Those that brush their teeth while just standing still in front of the mirror of the bathroom, with all kinds of things looking back at them from behind the doors of their medicine cabinet; and there are those who walk around while they brush. I am one of the first group of people. I spit, on average, about three to four times a brush, not including the end-of-the-brush-spit-and-rinse, followed by the tongue motion—the use of one's senses to enjoy the smoothness of those pearly whites after a Tartar Control Crest Brush.

The second brand of people which I mentioned, somewhat disturbs me, even though my father himself is an avid representative of this bunch. He strides around the house, in the wee hours of the night, in his 67 year old red and white bathrobe appearing, to an outside spectator, like a 37 year old man who has rabies. (He's really 46, but since he has no bald spot or gray hair, except for his bristly moustache, I thought I'd make him youngerthan he is. However, if you eversaw him on the basketball court, you'd think he was 146). Anyway, this crew of people, representing millions I'm sure, foams from the mouth. Sure, those of us who do remain in front of the sink allow the brushed toothpaste to reach our lips and beyond, but...if one is not in the vicinity of a basin, where does the "material to be spitted" go? Down the

hatch, that's where. Now, I have, on one occasion or possibly two, ambulated around the house with my Oral-B, but I assure you I rushed back to the bathroom to relieve myself of the stuff I did not desire to swallow. Those who are part of the walkers and brushers club SWALLOW all of that "stuff." There could be phlegm (I learned the spelling thanks to an episode of 'Mr. Belvedere'), or blood, or plaque, or more crud than what's in the medicine cabinet, or God knows what in the swallowed substance. Why would one want to actually gulp it down? That is my question for the night.

So, a word to the wise: conform...at least in this case. If you are a representative of the Walkers, then you must save yourself. If you swallow...don't. For those of you who do walk around, but return to the lavatory in order to spit, try swallowing just for kicks. Try something new. I just hate seeing my big, old, pop lumber around the house and I know that other people share his tradition. Soooo...be tough, yet gentle, humble, yet bold. Swayed always by beauty and truth...but, don't waddle around your home to perform such a simple task as brushing. Have a ball. Put a smile on my face. Talk hard. Try anything, if it won't kill you. Call her. Live life to the fullest...and don't forget, use Crest™ toothpaste, and brush in circles, not up and down.

-Avi Spivack, Class I



CAMERA

Click, click, tap, tap, tap, tap, 3 (beep) 2 (beep) 1 (beep).

* * * * * *

Matthew stands at the edge of the muddy creek in his red oversize cotton shirt reciting inane poetry with his arms in the air as Stephen sits on a patch of brown grass staring blankly at the angry beetle crossing his path. The disturbing wind sears their faces as the sun slowly sets on the desolate scene. Neither has any idea of the tragic calm that will settle here in the end.

A disturbing quiet fills the air as the inveterate evening maneuvers come to a close. Blankets and eyelids protect the residents from the world outside. A helicopter temporarily breaks the din of the crickets in this bucolic place.

A strong gleam shining at random intervals makes the trees in the swamp take on the formation of resurrected corpses stepping from their deathbeds. Smothered rumbling arises from somewhere far off as rags drenched in petroleum are placed on broken tree branches and one by one lit. Lips mumble prayers asking for forgiveness. The commanding arm falls and the green multitude begins to walk completely in synch. The footsteps pound the earth and it resounds as one giant, voluminous heartbeat, never ceasing or faltering. Consistent and slowly but surely gaining speed.

A flickering light breaches the night. A young woman parts her thick brown hair from her face and as if in a trance, she stares at the mass coming her way. Once she is lucid, her horrifying realization produces a piercing scream that breaks all order and the heartbeat stops abruptly as individuals disperse in all directions.

Chaos breaks out while the valley is

slowly illuminated in a beautiful aura of yellow with a bright lapis lazuli glow encircling it. Worn leather boots trample on broken doors, broken carriages, broken bodies. Crying, screaming and contumelious shouting mesh together in a violent attempt to make a simple point to the world. A cry for attention stifling a cry for help.

Innocent people attempt to save themselves in one way or another. Children wandering, searching for a recognizable face as they clutch at their stuffed animals, are suffocated as their faces fall in the mud. Last breaths are drawn in confusion. Glimmering metal appears in various locations, sedulously swinging and clanging, dismembered limbs strewn across the ground. Thick smoke arises from the orange-tinted destruction ensuing. Fear holds every person in a headlock.

Deafening screeching. All is peaceful.

The land lets out a deep sigh. The first solemn wisps of daybreak scan the remnants of the internecine travesty. The remaining few drag the carcasses to a huge ditch and the bowels of the earth devour them. Fleeing in total silence, each person alone, they prefer not to look back or even perceive what happened as reality.

Desolate wastelands of cracked mud as far as the eye can see. The only sign of civilization left is a yellow stuffed rabbit with one ear, its blank eyes staring into the sun. Close by, Matthew recites inane verses with his arms outstretched at the bank of a bloody creek as Stephen's body sinks deeper into the abyss.

Tap, tap, tap, click, click, buzzzzzzzzzz. "So that's how Uncle Stephen's life ended, huh?"

"Well, a bit of a grandiloquent portrayal but basically . . . yes."

"Hmmph, needs more depth."

-Manuel Argueta, Class II



BAREFOOT IN A CEMETERY

"How do you know? Is it carved in stone?" Those are the words with which I challenged my brother when we were younger when he said something that was true that I didn't think was true.

My tired toes, free from the imprisonment of uncomfortable shoes, were tickled by the plushy softness of new grass, bulbous earthworms on an angora carpet. I stood quietly, cautiously, like a stone, and thought. The peaceful stillness which enveloped the earth was in almost perfect contrast to the storm inside my skin. Thoughts buzzed through my head like angry bees, wanting to, desperate to sting something, blame someone. The seven dollar sunglasses perched casually on my nose filtered out most of the rays of an unknowing sun, as a playful breeze meandered through my hair, down my neck, and billowed out my clothes. I gazed across the calm horizon and saw stones, so many stones, like pieces on a gameboard strategically placed just so, as if according to a master's plan.

The stone in front of which I stood looked like the others, but it was not at all like the others. Cold and smooth, it stood solemnly, a soldier at attention, oblivious to the inconsistent air; one soldier amidst the army permanently stationed in that place. It's strange how indistinguishingly similar they look, until you come upon one with a familiar face. I came upon him, stark and painfully distinguishable: ZIEMBA. I had seen

that stone several times previous to that afternoon, but I had only really looked at it once before; it was a morning, or perhaps more accurately a mourning, when I averted my eyes from the long, black, sleek coffin which bedded my mother's family's patriarch. Even through the blurry haze of tears, I could not help but notice the coffin's perfect smoothness, like ice. The stone, too, was smooth. And so clean cut. It looked so simple. I laughed to myself at the irony in that. The concept that the "simple" rock represented was in actuality anything but; tombstones are like concrete sentences which state "This person was born, and died." (But they don't say anything about life.) "You can never judge a book by its cover," my grandfather always said, "Things ain't always like they seem, kiddo." He always had the answers; sometimes they were very clichéd, like life. Of course, our discussions were not usually over particularly serious things, because I was just "a kid." I always listened when he spoke, to my mother, to my aunts, to his equals. I was the unworthy commoner and he the wise old sage. I eagerly gathered the wisdom seeds which spewed forth from his lips. To him, death was simple, and he spoke quite frankly of it when his sister-in-law's mother died two days before she had planned a vacation. This is how he told us, "The old lady died on Tuesday and they were s'posed to leave on Friday, they couldn't get a refund on the plane tickets, so they threw the old

lady on ice for two weeks and went to Florida." "DZIADZ!" I remember exclaiming, surprised at his apparent (and untypical) lack of sympathy. "What?" he smiled, "it's not like they old lady minded, she wasn't going anywhere." (He paused.) "Life can't stop for death, kiddo."

"You have a way with words, Dziadzi," I said aloud, and I used the present tense, because I thought maybe he was there, listening. Technically he was so close by, tucked into the bosom of the earth, under a blanket of fertile brown soil, just beneath the privileged stone which bore his name. And dates. That's all. As if he were an average Joe. But he wasn't. He was a John. A caring, loving, kind, gentle, honest, wonderful John Joseph Ziemba, son, brother, husband, father, uncle, grandfather, friend; a man who would help whoever needed help and put the rest of the world before himself; a man who loved his family, his friends, and his God. But none of that is on the whitish greyish slab of marble. Just exactly how he wanted it. He didn't think of himself as a great man, just a guy who was trying the best to be the best he could be. I think he knew how much everybody loved him though. I hope he knew.

The stream of tears which glided their familiar path down my face were outdone by the river which cascaded through my heart. My dziadzi would not have wanted me to cry. "That's

life, kid," he would have said with a halfsmileshrugwink (a special gesture which only the grandfather types can perform) I know, I though, I just don't understand.

With every fiber of my being, I wanted to scream at him, at Him, and at the rest of the world, just because. Realizing that my voice would be muffled by my mortality, I didn't bother. "Shhhhhhh," the wind lulled in an attempt to calm my anger, to quiet the bees. Inhaling pure, raw life-air, I opened my eyes. Adjusted to the funky texture of the angora carpet, and perhaps a little frozen, the bulbous earthworms attached to my feet ceased their squirming and stood petrified. I knew that I could not, must not, dwell in any place too long; life moves on, I move on.

Naturally, moving on was not as easy as I might have wanted. And then today reminded me that yesterday is a resting place, a reference for tomorrow, our destination. My eyes were particularly transfixed by the prickly soft spurts of life which sprang through the blanket of soil. It had been almost two months since the body had been interred, since the ground had been disturbed, and the grass was growing back nicely; life moves on. I took one last look at the miniature monument, one soldier of many, and sighed deeply; I could finally read the concrete sentence. He death was certain now; it was real. It was carved in stone.

-Liz Hauck, Class II

OVER COFFEE WITH MARIANNE...

Words pose on end.

What should we say?

A truth not chosen, not debated,

Accepted by yourself.

Respected.

Content with what didn't happen,

It never could have worked.

An attempt,

Ending the resounding words of love that congregate.

Correlate.

Happiness perches on blissful lamenting,

Wherein the fragments of numbers

Relate a stronger friendship.

Memories congregate.

Correlate.

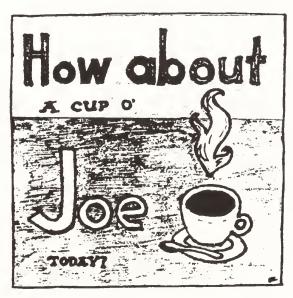
Resounding those words of love.

Thoughts congregate.

Correlate.

Two souls are intertwined forever.

-John Moore, Class II



CRUCIFIED

Why did you do it?

Why did you just sit there when they came for you?

Why didn't you run, fight, shout, do something?

The others say it was because of your goodness.

They say you died to save us, to give us a chance to live.

But they didn't know you like I did.

They never saw the void inside of you.

The utter lack of emotion.

No matter what they do, he forgives them, they say.

How can he be so pious, so holy?

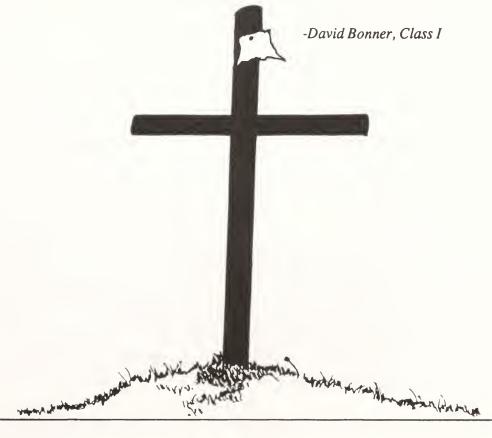
We know the answer, don't we, my friend?

You let it happen because you truthfully did not care.

How you lived, when you died, nothing mattered to you.

You simply let it happen.

Now, thanks to you, they've made apathy into a God.



HIM

I have seen him in the hallway, lumbering with an awkward little bounce in his step, contradicting and oddly distorting his gangly form. His face looks straight ahead as if to feign assurance, but his eyes, ever focused on the ground directly in front of his toes hint at hidden introspective insecurity. He is always alone. I have seen his tall, slim form grow with a constant fading, his almost emaciated body jerking past me time after time; he wears a haggard look about the skeletal arches of his perfectly angular cheekbones. His baggy jeans, roomy button-down shirts, and enormous sneakers are not worn with the intent of conforming to the crowd or adhering to the guidelines of the styles of popular culture; they are simply too big. He probably could not even define popular culture if anyone took the time to notice him and ask. If. But no one has, and his mouth is forever closed, his tongue seemingly incapable of forming responses to my own silent inquiries. I have seen him in the hallway with his incongruous gait, black backpack carefully, carelessly slung over his shoulder, partially empty, yet full enough to pull his shirt with a stretch, so that it outlines his protruding clavicle in red plaid. He looked back at me once, and saw through me.

-Marianne Staniunas, Class II



BAD EGG

The empty stare of the white walls pierced her intangible thoughts, which were skirting along the edges of her mind, like memories of childhood that can't quite be placed.

The metallic clank of a bell shattered her dismal thoughts and sent them flying to the different corners of her brain, where they cringed in the darkness. Dinner was coming, she thought. What could it be tonight? Gray potatoes, the ones that were rejects from the nearby farm, were always on the menu. Soggy corn, a pale and sickly yellow, was laid with thin pieces of turkey on a dull tin platter.

The meal was wheeled into her room. She was forced to eat with her hands, because "she exhibits dangerous behavior towards herself and others" when she used the cheap tin silverware. Tomorrow she would eat like a queen. The repast was planned in her mind, away from dark thoughts, which were now locked away, at least for the time being.

Breakfast would start with pizza. Pepperoni, with oil seeping through the thickly layered cheese. The lobster with pats of butter dripping off of the red shell...was it red? She couldn't quite remember......

The tray was pushed aside, a sigh of disgust escaping her lips. Her stomach would be better off empty, to save room for tomorrow. She would eat until she had to throw up, and then she would gorge some more. "What could the side effects of this be?" she thought

to herself. "Could I get... sick?" She chuckled to herself at the absurdity of it.

The thoughts of gas seeped under the door of her mind and woke the cringing creatures from their corners. They rose and came together, each fighting for control. It didn't matter who won; they were all black, dark, the same evil thing as one another. They just muddled together as a sheet of black fell over her, taking control.

Dreams tormented her, night after night. Tonight was different, however. She was in a bright tunnel with white walls, and she wasn't scared, only alone. She smelled something-it didn't hurt. It just smelled rotten. It smelled like eggs that have been left out on the counter too long because no one would take the time to put them back, noticing them, but not caring, until they went bad and the stench became an annoyance, so they were thrown out. She drifted out of sleep, out of the pure white into the early morning darkness of her room. Her room. The eight by ten enclosure that she knew only too well.

The breakfast then lay before her. Utensils were placed by the side of the white porcelain plate, real silver ones. A linen napkin lay casually on the tray, the kind that the warden brought out at his important luncheons. She wondered if there had been a few of these meetings concerning her. She doubted that the linen napkins were used at these, however. The lobster tasted like pepperoni,

and it didn't live up to the expectations she had held for it.

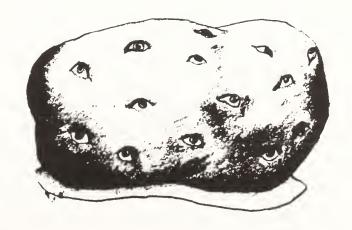
A shower was permitted. New white clothes with too much starch were laid next to the unusually soft towels. The white tiles of the shower had been cleaned; the mildew smell that had been etched forever in her mind was gone, the dirt had disappeared from the crevices.

The clothes were put on mechanically, the walk down the hall was robotic. The yells and shouts and banging of dirty tin utensils against the cheap surplus tables were

faint, far off. The walls of the room were white, the dress of the priest was black, and the words he spoke were transparent.

She sat down on the wooden chair which was bolted to the floor. Solemn faces stared at her from beyond the wired glass square in the door. She closed her eyes to find herself in the tunnel again, the pungent odor greeting her once more. This time, the scent was familiar-too familiar, in fact. It was the smell of a bad egg, a rotten one, which had been forgotten and now was to be thrown away.

-Julie Bench, Class II



GOOCH

Gooch was 14 years old. He was a beanpole, slim as a hair. Six foot four, one hundred and twenty-five pounds, ragged undersized nondescript clothing, a precision flattop, the neck of a goose, a raw bumpy complexion, shy but busy eyes, intentional slouch, hands too large for his pockets; to his cruel peers, Gooch was a clown.

Months of salty tears and a battered ego had hardened this young man. In order to deflect properly the darts of the ignorant students around him, he had filled and masked his cork personality with a cold gray cement. He was just different, a genetic scapegoat. A sensitive human being nonetheless, but marked early as a target for mindless insults. This humbled stone pole loathed waking up each morning but remarkably softened as the school day came to a close. Practice neared. A transformation would begin, a gradual molting. As each minute in school passed, the individual grains in his protective cement exterior loosened and fell, and skin and cork began to poke through his facade... He had a love.

All the bleak rainy mornings when Pittsburgh lay lazily in bed, all the icy dusks when snow reigned the city, all the sweltering noontimes when the metropolis dashed for the shady hammock and relaxing lemonade, all the thick black nights when neighbors comfortably fluffed pillows, all the moist misty dawns when people dreamt, Gooch was there. The hoop up the hill, lit by the faithful streetlights, was his sanctuary. This was his life. Gooch was basketball. Here in his safe harbor, he could work, succeed, surpass, excel, conquer. No immature students, no rigid teachers, no indifferent parents, no taunts, no pains, no fears, no frowns, no tears. The basket was his cathedral.

At two o'clock each afternoon Gooch didn't mind that damn nickname which he despised so vehemently. Things were different, it was no longer "school." School desks changed into backboards, chairs the creaky grandstand; people were on his side, bullies became allies, Gooch was a celebrity. His years of meticulous religious practicing lifted him to a plateau above all who sat and stared. Now he was a performer, now he demonstrated his art, now he emoted his true love. His stone face would actually grin slightly. He might puff out his chest a little, maybe even blush some. It was his time now.

The locker room hallway up to the gymnasium was musty, moldy and cold; the walls were painted a depressing flat blue. As he sauntered toward the cracks of light from the gym he would always visualize his neighborhood: the swaying oaks, sleeping houses, uneven asphalt, rusted basket. The steps at the end of the hallway were worn with decades of basketball sneakers of boys who were normal, who fit in, who were socially better adjusted than he. He would simply shake his head; now he was ready. Once he opened the gymnasium door he would be hurled headlong into a screaming whirlwind of countless faces, mixed voices, encouraging shouts, beaming lights, and the familiar dusty smell of the wooden court. The cheering and applause would consume him, "Gooch... Gooch... We want Gooch... Gooch..."

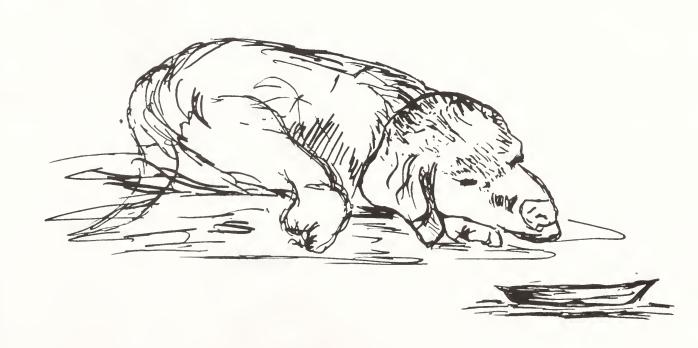
- Ben Cohen-Leadholm, Class I

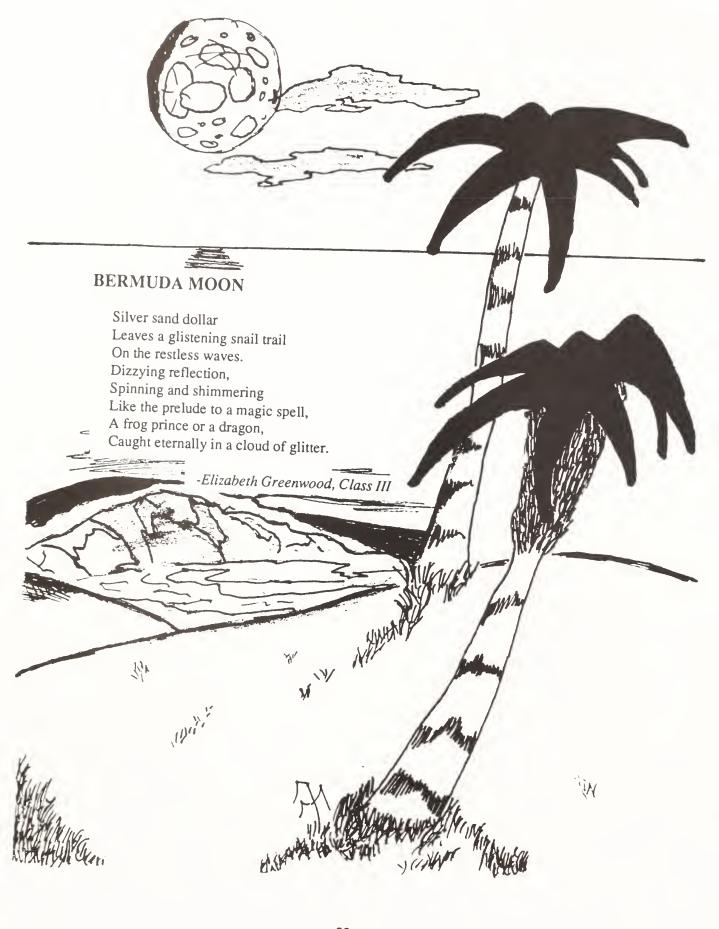
OLDER

My grandmother's dog has eyes like round glowing moons. Her nose is white and when you rub her tummy the skin is loose and slides around in your hand, and her ribs are like little speed bumps under your fingers. She never jumps like she used to, ripping your nylons when you visited on Sundays right after church. She sniffs your feet and whines like a baby, and you have to kneel down to her. She licks the tips of your fingers and her moony green eyes are sad. She huddles on the couch and trembles, like she's scared or cold.

She lives alone with my aunt. My grandmother is resting under a bank of dirt, without even a gravestone to say she was alive.

-Christina Tinglof, Class II





THE CALLING

"Know ye the components o' the spell?" the wizard asked his fledgling apprentice, fifteen years of age.

"Ay, master," the apprentice replied and reached to the cabinet drawer to take them out.

"Nay, master." The apprentice sighed. Even the merest task turned into an argument with this wizard.

"In my presence ye do not fetch thing wi' ye 'ands. In my presence ye 'ave to levitate 'em."

"Ay, master." The apprentice concentrated. After only two months his master expected him to be able to accomplish everything a full-fledged wizard could, and with half the effort. Nothing moved. The apprentice focused his mind on the blackness, and then on the drawer. So deep was he in concentration that he practically had a heart attack when something slimy struck him on the cheek. He fell to the floor, gasping, as the wind was knocked out of him. The wizard bent down and snatched his false teeth off the floor.

"This be showin' me what good's to become o'apprenticin' a red 'aired lad 'stead o' a native one. This one speaks wi' the tongue o' a scholar an' dresses like royalty, yet 'e can't e'en learn a simple cantrip!" the wizard grumbled, brushing the dirt off of his teeth and placing them back in his mouth. He was just waiting for any conceivable excuse

to be rid of his new, foreign apprentice so he could train a native, tow-headed boy. The apprentice held his tongue, though he dearly wished to lash out with a stinging retort. "What 'ave ye nothin' to say fe yeself? In all those scholarly corners o' ye mind, isn't there somethin' ye' could answer?"

"What do you want me to answer? That I'm stupid? I'm not. Do you want me to rebel against being scolded unjustly? I won't. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. If I rebel, you will cancel my apprenticeship, which is exactly what you want. If you cancel my apprenticeship, another apprenticeship is slim; you are old and gray and grumpy, yet you were my only choice. The other wizards would have demanded a much more exorbitant fee." The apprentice sat back on his stool and waited. The wizard blinked. The boy in front of him had done exactly the opposite of what any native village boy would have done. He had thought through all of his actions and their consequences logically, not giving way to blindemotion. This boy might become something, he might attain the rank of High Sorcerer, a title not claimed in over a century. Perhaps the foreigner wasn't so bad after all.

"Fetch the components from the cupboard," he ordered, turning to his sketches. The apprentice hesitated, not sure whether his master meant for him to fetch them physically or magically. The wizard waved for him to open the drawer with his hands. The apprentice looked surprised, but he quickly obeyed.

"Here they are, master, "the apprentice murmured as he handed the wizard the strange articles. The spell to call a beast from another plane was very complicated and exacted a toll of nearly two years from a wizard's lifespan.

The wizard placed the components on the small table before him and began to intone the spell. As soon as the first word was mumbled, a light breeze began to drift lazily through. As the spell progressed, the breeze grew steadily stiffer.

The wizard placed the small purple stones in a circle first; they would keep the beast confined so that it could not escape and wreak havoc across this world.

Nexthe placed eight metal rods across the circle, resembling a cut pie. He whispered a couple of words and dropped two silver globs in the center of the circle. They melted down and formed an almost mirror-like surface on the table. He whispered a few more words and placed a dried bear's claw in the circle and fell silent. He waited, and waited, and waited. Then, finally, there was a stir in the silver. The apprentice gasped as a gigantic beast reared up from the bear's claw. In this plane it consisted mainly of black smoke, but it was still lethal when released.

"Who dareth to call me from my

slumber!" it roared. "Why 'ave ye disturbed me?!" The apprentice was knocked off his stool by the power of the beast's thunderous roar.

"Lad, be not frightened by it, it 'olds no power o'er ye 'less ye want to step there i' it's circle."

"Whate'er ye'll 'ave wi' me, I'll 'ave none o' it! Release me to my prison o' darkness, I'd sooner be there than serve a 'uman!" the creature spat, circling around as if he were seeking an escape.

"There be no escape from this prison, an' I'll not send ye; back to ye 'ome in 'ell 'til ye've answered my question."

"An' what, pray tell, be ye question?"

The wizard paused, trying to think of something to ask it. Then he thought of it, the perfect inquiry.

"Where be it located the place where one does enter the Lan' o' Light?" he asked, eyeing the beast. The Land of Light was the land of angels and good intentions, it was rumored. The beast barked out a laugh.

"An' this be what was summoned to this exhaustin' plane to answer? Hah! I'll show ye the Lan' o' Light!" The creature snarled and threw up his arms. Instantly a scene appeared on the walls of his magical cage. Angels and cherubs flitted in and out of view; people picked grapes and drank wine all day. Everybody did what they wanted to do.

Then the wizard noticed the rip. It

was only about a millimeter square, but every minute it would grow wider, longer and deeper.

"Do ye see? All those who think they've been so lucky to reach that LAN' 'ave been amusin' themselves, an' only themselves, for so long that the place 'as fallen to disrepair an' the Lan' o' Darkness 'as succeeded i' breakin' through. The people of the light do nothin' all day an' all night long an' they think they'll live fore'er. Think ye that ye still want to go there?" The wizard shook his head. "I think nay."

"Nay, beast, but ye worl' be not

won'rous either. E'ery meal ye 'ave, ye 'ave to cast ye eyes 'roun' like prey to ensure that none o' it be snatched from un'er ye nose. Nay, beast, my place be right here." With a flick of the wizard's wrist the beast disappeared back to whence it came.

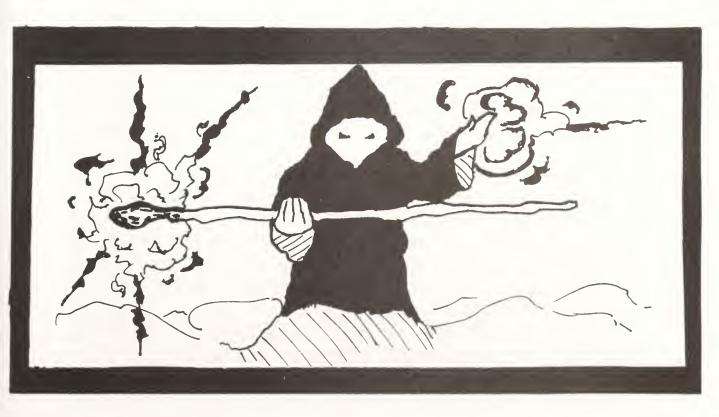
"Master?" The apprentice rose stiffly.

"Let that be a lesson to ye, lad, ne'er get a demon angry, ye ne'er know what they may show ye."

"Ay, master."

It's too bad the apprentice didn't follow that advice in his later years.

- Rhaina Chrobak, Class III



ROAD MAP

His mind was like a road map indecipherable lines reaching off in all directions, with no real center. (With a brain like that, how could I have been mad if he forgot me, just another branch?) He was scrambled. He told me why, he knew for sure, and he told me he refused to do anything for it. He didn't want to go changing in order to please anyone, even himself. I remember the night he told me, humid and sneaky, when we fell asleep on the couch. He said medicine won't help, nothing can help. He's resigned to a life of disorientation, and he doesn't care. But I know that medicine, I know it works. He didn't believe me.

How can someone be older and younger at the same time? Maybe it's just how he took pleasure in the little things. I can't seem to do that. He said that I'm too uptight.

He was tall and lanky, and he stooped a little bit, as if he were carrying some heavy psychosomatic tumor on his back. But I told him how to fix that. He didn't listen. His hair was bleached and just a little too long. His eyes were wide and innocent, crystal blue spheres that never stayed in one place for very long.

He stares at me with those eyes now. Or, to clarify, he stares in my mind's eye. I remember those many nights, sitting at home: He's late again. He might not show up. I was used to it, but I still got so upset. Must be something to do with his sickness, I always told myself.

In the beginning it was so different. Maybe it was because it was summer. Summer affects people in strange ways. The first time I met him, I didn't think much of him. I called up his best friend, who lives close to me, and said, "Hey. Want to come over?" He invited me to his house. "—— is here. Remember? I told you about him." Yeah, OK. I sort of remember.

That night I wasn't that impressed. He kept wiping his nose on his sleeve. He was really good at pretending to walk into things. I left at 3:00 AM.

It was fun, the three of us. He had a car and it was all new to me. We drove around almost every night. The breeze through the car matched the one in my stomach. The breeze smelled of dust, of bile, of summer. I was prickly-green with anticipation.

I remember one time that it was just the two of us before he became my boyfriend, something else to worry about. We went to the Arboretum on a very yellow, dry day. He wanted me to climb the highest rock in the park, but I feigned dizziness and sat down. Kind of symbolic. He always wanted to go higher, and I, the droning voice of Reason, had to hold him down, like an owner restraining an overzealous puppy. I guess that after-

noon is when I started thinking about him. At least, that's when I started mentioning him in my diary.

A week and a half later, he drove me up to Vermont for my "July of higher learning." I introduced him as "my boyfriend" and it surprised me how hard it was to say goodbye. It was raining heavily that evening, making me feel all the more bleak, not wanting him to leave. I followed him to his car, staring at my feet, drawing inward. In lieu of a kiss, he bit my neck. My boyfriend, the soul-sucking vampire.

August, when I returned home, was the kind of month that stays with you forever, the kind of memory that becomes smooth from rubbing and reliving it. I was in a whirl. We were together every night. My curfew may as well not have existed. He couldn't get the car very often, so we watched a lot of television and we didn't talk much.

Then September came. Each day closer to the end of this whirling excitement, this soaring-stomachness; each day pulling away from my core of content, as if my happiness were the heart of an artichoke, and the remaining days were the leaves. He didn't seem to notice. My last free night came, and he didn't show up. (I guess I had ceased to be a priority.) I went out with my girlfriends instead.

When I got back home, I burned all my road maps. I didn't need them scrambling my sense of direction anymore.



-Sonya Satinsky, Class II

THE HEAVENLY ACCIDENT

One night, an angel carelessly Broke her necklace. One single round pearl fell from The heavens And landed on a piece of sky. The angel's sapphire eyes Turned to glass, spilling out Diamond teardrops, and they Became the stars. She opened her ruby mouth, And sighed, and her silver breath Became the lining of the clouds. She tried to pick the pearl up With her porcelain fingers, But every time she got close, It rolled away. She became so frustrated that She pulled a single strand Of golden hair from her head And it floated through the sky And wrapped itself around the moon. She carefully picked up the other pearls And began to string them together again. The beauty of night Was once the sadness of an angel.

-Kelly O'Rourke, Class II

MAGIC ELIXIR

There in the bottom of the old chest I found a small violet bottle marked "Magic Elixir." On it were written the words "Drink Me." I placed the bottle over my lips and drank the liquid. Ha ha ha ha ha! Impudent humans, locking me up in this bottle! I am Kazar, once ruler of the Universe, and now I have been reduced to using this kid as my host body. These humans will pay. And then I will be ruler of the Universe, but first I have to go to the bathroom.

Now let's see which host body shall I use next. Schwarzenegger's? Nah. Stallone's? Nah. The President's? Yes! That's it! I'll just work my way up. First I'll use the Mayor, then the Senator and finally the President. "I have an appointment with Mayor Menino." "Hi, I have an appointment with Senator Kennedy." "Excuse me, the President and I are going jogging, can you please tell him I'm here?" Now I get to hypnotize the U.S. and take over the nuclear and secret weapons. "Mr. President, you're on every channel in 5,4,3,2,1, action." "People of the U.S., you are now under my command! I am your supreme ruler. Everything I say will be done without question. You may now go ahead with your normal lives." "And we're off. Thank you Mr. President." "Go jump in a lake!" "Right away sir." Now to make some phone calls. "Yeah, is this the President of Russia? Yeah? Surrender now or forever pay the consequences!" "This is Barbara Walters reporting live from the White House." "Mr. President, you have conquered the world, what next?" "First of all, it's supreme ruler to you and I'm going to Disney World, and after that I'm going to make action figures of myself." "Well you heard it here first. This is Barbara Walters signing off."



-Constantine Firindis, Class VI

DREAMthink

People are not going
To dream of baboons and periwinkles.
Only, here and there, an old sailor,
Drunk and asleep in his boots,
Catches tigers
In red weather.

-Wallace Stevens, 1879-1955

I am in a theater not watching a movie about bicycles. A friend from the Middle East whom I haven't seen for years has just joined a conga line a moment ago, kicking her legs vehemently, joyously, out to the side. I sit talking to a boy I know, whose hair is much shorter at this moment than usual, and suddenly an old familiar lady shrieks at him, "Fat boy, ruining the movie again! Do you have a girlfriend?" He puts a pencil to my temple and murmurs questioningly, "Yes."

Tumbling out of my dreamscape to my alarm clock accompaniment, I blink and shiver in the January cold-morning air. My messy room is hazy. No conga lines here. It's Tuesday.

By the time I have pulled myself together and headed off to school, my night library is abandoned. My bizarre adventure is forgotten until I see an oddly dreamy boy — oh! It's Fat boy, ruining the movie"; I wonder how I could have so nonchalantly neglected my subconscious fantasy. I stare at him, at his hair. I am unsure of how it used to look. Drowsy though I may be, I realize it's impolite to gape at strangers. Obediently, I whisk my eyes across the room and proceed to have a day veiled with an overall blur of unreality. No dreams create my world.

I am one of those people who has crazy, freaky, ponderous (and at the same time terrifically amusing) dreams quite often. They color my moods; they color my thoughts; they make me wonder about people I hardly know who show up at night having just won the lottery or working out on Stairmasters or shopping for rifles at Ann and Hope. After such a moonlit excursion, I begin to question my sanity, as well as the concept of reality, as well as the private intricate inner mechanics of the minds of my vaguely understood fellow humans. Am I the only one, I wonder, who has scavenger hunts in a comfield? Am I the only one to encounter waiters who proclaim, "I am with the one who speaks the truth"? Am I the only one who sees movies rated IOU?

Dreams make me more alone than most anything else. Mine are more different from yours than anything, except maybe someone else's. Dreams are more personal than memory; dreams guide us through our lives with a foggy map of mystery. Dreams tell us things, they tell me things. They enlighten. They bring us close to other bleary-eyed comuters: what else can they be thinking about at seven in the morning besides last night's activities? Dreams bond us with their webs of inexplicable comfort and understanding of the farfetched. We recognize our next door neighbor from when we were six, even though she looks like our sister. We know her. We recognize the bleary eyed man from the bus in the morning, even though he looks like Ed McMahon.

In their innocent, effortless splendor, dreams provoke our intellects, evoke memories from many moons past, revoke our doubts concerning true affections. Anything, no matter how uncommon, feels perfectly natural during a wispy trip of evening. Dreams tug us together and hurl us lifetimes away from each other, provide us with an unpredictable, euphoric haven, make us shiver, wake us up. My dreams affect me profoundly, yanking me out of an everyday mire. My dreams are my personal perpetual celestial net, catching me slices of heaven.

-Deborah Milstein, Class II



WAITING

She is sitting there again across the street on those cold, concrete steps of her apartment, looking lonely. Crisp, frail leaves are tossled by the wind and roll past her dirty yellow sneakers, blowing by like urban tumble weeds. Her hand, adorned with cheap plastic rings, tucks a lock of smooth purple hair behind one ear. Then her eyes lower to look once again at her cereal box watch. Yes, he is still late. Why does she insist on waiting for him? Sure, sometimes he does come, driving up in the beat-up, green VW bug, music blaring out of the rattling windows. He offers her a weak smile as he pushes open the stubborn door for her, but never apologizes for being late. This time he's not showing up.

She takes one hopeful look to the left, her eyes following the rusty, green bumper rounding the corner, but she knows it's not him. Another futile attempt, now to the right, past the 7-11 and the hardware store, past the worn woman pushing a shopping cart brimming with plastic bags to the group of chattering teenagers approaching. No need to squint; that's not him either. She knows, yet she still waits.

I stare at her, and she is not looking back. I want to tell her to stop waiting, that she can do better, to go upstairs and call Jordan. He can always cheer her up. "Friends Forever" they vowed in second grade. He used to peep his head of messy red hair through her door in front of the pink elephant wallpaper and smile. The same grin, she thought, as those silly, round creatures on her wall. That always made her laugh. She used to laugh a lot. She had a beautiful smile; Jordan told her so. But that's not good enough anymore. I can see that she wants more than a best friend.

I snap back to now and look across the street. She returns my stare, blinking blindly. I want to stand up and scream at her. I want my angry voice to travel over the honking of cars and buzzing of engines and slap her in the face. "What are you sitting there for? Do something! Go somewhere! STOP WAITING!" She won't hear me; she can, but chooses not to. She continues to look blankly at me. No, not at me, through me.

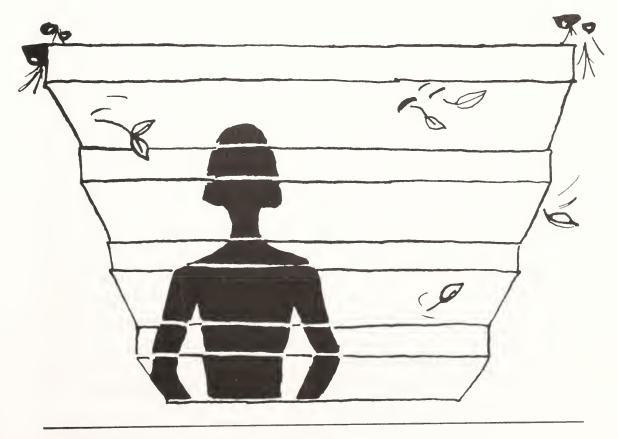
I get tired of being mad at her, feeling sorry for her; that never gets me anywhere. My mind gets frustrated with the topic, so it starts thinking a favorite song and my mouth plays along and starts humming. Inotice that a calming voice behind me has joined in. I turn around and see the familiar gas station jacket and red hair.

"Jordan!"

He smiles his pink elephant smile. "Hey, why so down? Where's that smile of yours?" He knows what's wrong; he always does. "Come on," he says with a wink. "You look like you need some hot chocolate. My treat."

He gives me a comforting hug and offers a reassuring hand to help me up. As we begin to walk away humming in almost-unison, I glance over my shoulder at the store window across the street. I look at my yellow sneakers and purple hair and smile at my reflection. This time she sees me and smiles back.

-Clara Ellertson, Class II



BLUE

Blue. She woke up suddenly. And all she could see was blue.

"Where am I?" she asked the young man standing next to her.

But he said nothing in reply. He just stood there, dressed in paper-thin khakis and a purple button-down shirt and stared. He noticed that she was beginning to grow angry as her fiery green eyes darted from the floor to the ceiling and up and down each of the four flat walls. He had seen those mystifying orbs before but he could not remember where. He continued his piercing silent interrogation and unable to withhold any longer, she began her response.

"I had to do it," she started.

He listened carefully while she went on. He watched the flames disappear from her eyes and spied her hands, rough but with well-manicured nails painted crimson, emerge from beneath the blanket. He saw her auburn hair, half pulled back with a flowered strip of linen, clinging to her neck. He puzzled at her earrings: five in the left; two in the right. All of them were the same: small silver studs. One, however, was different. He looked closer, discovering it to be a miniature ballet slipper.

She noticed his narrow eyes drifting and did not think he was paying attention, but she talked anyway. She did not care. She just needed to tell the story; the whole story . . . from the beginning.

"I was being pounded by mountains of stress. I needed an alternative, a method, to

fix everything. I did not want to be the 5' 1", 85 pound ballerina. I wanted to be as thin as everyone else, or thinner."

His eyes surveyed her body now, but he did not see anything strange. All that he saw in front of him was a beautiful woman. All that his dark brown eyes would allow him to see was the silky white skin that barely stretched over the pain.

"I started dancing more," she went on. "I was at the studio at 5:25, shortly before the sun rose. I always ate an apple on the way. My instructors were impressed by my dedication and I was glad to have the encouragement. Soon, I did not even need the apple."

He studied her fingers as they struggled with each other. He watched her knuckles turn white as the muscles pushed and pulled. He noticed the numerous hints of pink in her nail polish. He noticed the tree of blue veins that grew from wrist to finger tip. He cringed at the long red scar that extended from thumb to pinky.

"I changed quickly when I arrived at the studio. Often, I would have to wear a few layers. I danced until everyone else arrived, which was usually about 8:45. By that time I was starving and sometimes gave in to having a bagel. I did not like to drink water, though, because the scale always added a few ounces just for that. I was dancing again by 9:30. The other dancers marveled at my energy. I did too."

He looked at her as she removed the endless layers of sheets and blankets.

"Sometimes I feel like I am a furnace. Other times, I am in a tub of ice," she explained matter of factly with a shy smile on her face.

He saw her neck and shoulders now. The muscles were much too visible and every time she moved her head, he watched the overworked joints strain. But she still looked beautiful, so he continued to listen.

"I usually danced until 12:00 with a few short breaks in between. If the instructor left quickly, I could sneak in a few extra minutes and a few more calories burned. While the other dancers were leaning against the barre resting and chatting, I was still slowly leaping across the floor and striving to hold my arms in the air."

He was gazing at her arms: pale, overly thin, hints of muscle now lost. He looked at his own arms: tan from the summer heat, carefully sculpted muscles. He knew that his arms were not very large, but he also knew that both of hers, and more, would match up to one of his.

"I hardy talked to anyone anymore. I was constantly alone and I did not care," she said as calmly as possible.

He placed his hand gently on her arm, but she used all of her strength to pull away from the comfort and concern.

"I know I did not need any help so I worked out my own routine. Without anyone to hassle me, I could do what I wanted and needed to do. I even thought about leaving my roommate and moving somewhere alone, but I did not have time to look. I had to dance every minute, and then a little bit more."

He wanted to do something for her now. As he watched the sparks return to her eyes, he wanted to help. But he did not know how she would react so he did not do anything.

"During the lunch break, I would relax. Sometimes I would read, usually novels with almost no plots in which the characters live ideal lives and have few problems. I knew I could be like these fictional phenomenons if I kept up the discipline. If I continued to eat very little and dance a very lot, I, too, could become part of the fairy tale."

He looked at her upper body. Her chest was barely identifiable beneath the pale pink gown and her stomach looked overly flat. It seemed almost to cave inward.

"I would start dancing again about 1:30. This was the more strenuous part of the day. The afternoon was the time to work even harder: more jetes; more pirouettes; more graceful arms; perfect balance; perfect everything. The afternoon was the time to be refreshed after lunch and awake after resting. I had little of either, but I knew I wanted to be the best and, more importantly, the skinniest. So I threw my body into even the most minuscule move. If it was only placing my feet in fifth position, I would try hard to make them look flawless."

He looked at her feet. Once again he saw the screaming tree of veins. This time it extended from ankle to toe. He saw the many calluses and broken toenails. He saw the bruised heels and the blistered soles. She did not seem to feel any of it.

"I danced all afternoon. I tried to skip

the short break at 2:30 or 3:00, but sometimes I got lazy and had to stop. Those were usually the days when the air conditioner broke down, but sometimes when it was cool, I gave up too easily. With everyone else resting, it was hard to keep going. I tried to remind myself of how many more calories I would burn, of how much thinner I would be, but sometimes it just did not work."

He glanced down at her legs now. They looked as if they would hardly be able to support a child, never mind a dancer. Her leg was simply hip to knee to ankle with everything in between being the same size. He looked at his arm again and this time he found a match. Her leg was about the same width as his arm. He tried not to grimace.

"I stopped dancing by 4:00 or 4:30 and felt that I had almost worked enough. If I still had energy on the way home, I would stop at the gym for a little while. I would use the Stairmaster or an exercise bike for about a half hour. I wanted to swim, but I was not sure that I would be able to breathe well enough. On my way home, I would grab a yogurt at the store. I would also have one glass of water, but I would only drink the entire thing if I was extremely thirsty."

His eyes bulged, but he tried not to let her see them. He looked at her face in astonishment. She seemed so proud of herself, so sure that she was doing everything right.

"I started to get hungrier though," she said with a sigh.

His eyes almost returned to normal

when he heard the good news.

"I found a new way to eat and still lose weight. I would get up in the morning and have whatever I wanted and as much as I wanted. A whole package of bagels, a dozen of donuts, half a box of cereal, ten sausages, a few cinnamon buns, a pint of orange juice; you name it, I ate it. I ate until I was stuffed. And then I ate more."

His eyes widened once again as he looked at the beautiful woman in front of him. But now he began to see how frail she was, how unhealthy she looked. He wondered how she ate so much and still looked so thin

"I would eat and eat and eat. But then I would let it all out. My hands became raw each time I shoved them into my throat, but I felt relieved. I could feel full and know that I wasn't gaining a single calorie. And if I was, I would burn it off later."

His eyes wandered to her hands now. He saw the small row of narrow lines that dug into her bright white knuckles. Once again, he noticed the many chips in her nail polish. Once again, he saw the bright blue veins glaring from her hand.

"I no longer needed a bagel for lunch. I would eat all I wanted for breakfast and again for dinner. I knew that I could get rid of it. All that it took was a quick fist right down the throat. After dinner, I would do a few hundred sit-ups just to make sure all of the calories had disappeared."

He looked at her face now. His dark brown eyes no longer saw a beautiful woman.

They now saw a scared woman, a troubled woman, a sick woman, a seventy-four pound woman in need of serious help.

"Where am I?" she asked the young man.

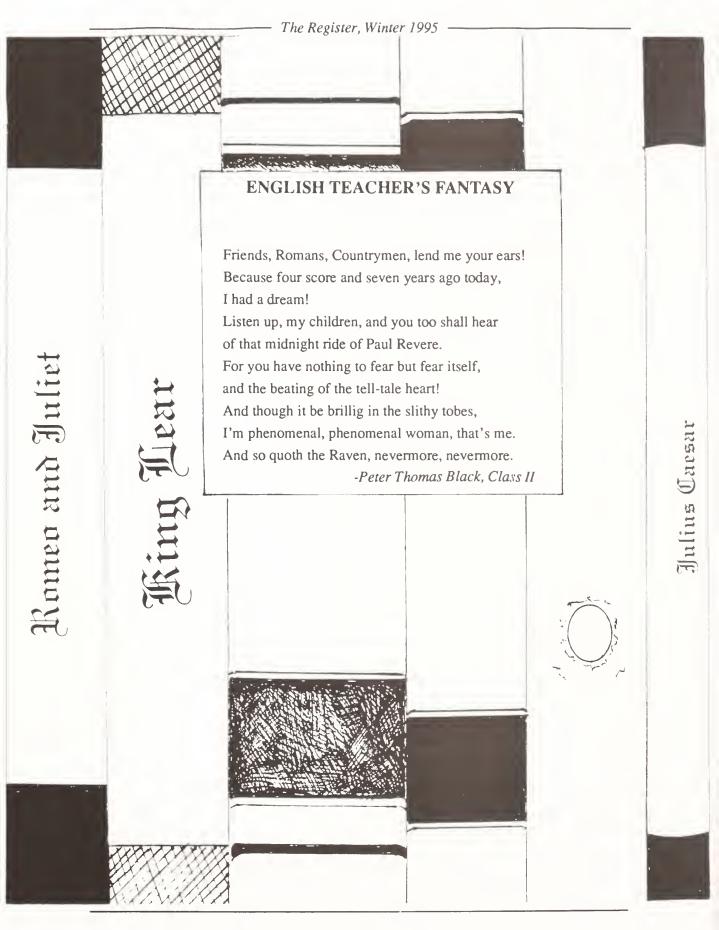
"Right where you need to be," he replied as he slowly strolled out of the blue room.

He walked into the clinical white hall. As he glanced at his hand where the scars from the small row of narrow lines still remained, he knew that he would be back to visit her tomorrow.

The opening performance of *Swan Lake* was different that night. Without his first rate Giselle, he could not leap as brilliantly or hold his arms as high. He had recovered, but a long roller coaster still loomed ahead of her.

-Angela Bayer, Class I





THE GARMENT KEEPER

If you and I are kept in by sheer anger, then what fools are we! Why can we not be just in our prejudgments instead of wicked cruelty? Lay down the bond of wretched embellishment and see me for who I am, for how I ACT and LOVE. Tell ME what you want, not some Gatekeeper's son who gets enjoyment out of running down stairs armed with grapes, which he uses to throw at people who walk past. Not to mention after he put them all into his mouth to fake a bout of mumps. Then he throws them.

You SEE there's no use in telling the insane. All they'll do is pretend to understand you, but they won't, because they'll be busy counting, or attempting to count your eyelashes.

So, I implore you, in matters of importance, ask me, for I, am not insane. I can try to understand your petty rationale.

For instance, if you were to say to me:

"Garment Keeper! Where are my garments?"

I would promptly instruct you as to where to find your clothes.

And if you said, "Friend! Why do so many people go to the forest for picnics on hot afternoons instead of the field?" I would first bring you to the field, and then the woods, so that you could see the difference.

And if you asked me, "What is it about you that makes me feel so special? I would walk up close to you and kiss you firmly on the lips.

So you can tell me anything

-Amy Lawless, Class I

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